

INFO MEMO

October 31, 2017

FOR: Distribution

FROM: ADM J. M. Richardson, Chief of Naval Operations

SUBJECT: Executive Summary Comprehensive Review

- In response to the series of incidents in the Surface Force in 2017, culminating in the collisions involving USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62) and USS JOHN S MCCAIN (DDG 56) and the loss of 17 US Sailors, the Navy conducted a Comprehensive Review to identify why these incidents occurred and to develop the actions needed to prevent them in future operations. This review was informed further by other mishap events occurring over the last ten years.
- The Navy found that rising pressure to meet operational demands over a sustained period of time led those in command to rationalize declining standards in basic fundamental skills, team work, operational safety, assessment and professional culture, resulting in an accumulation of risk in the Western Pacific. The demand for ready and certified ships to support operations exceeded the quantity. Lacking an effective process to clearly define available supply and associated readiness, risks were taken increasingly to provide these ships for dynamic, short notice tasking. This environment normalized to the point where individuals and groups of individuals could no longer recognize that processes in place to identify, communicate and assess readiness were no longer working on ships and or at headquarters.
- Going forward the Navy must develop and formalize “firebreaks” into our force generation and employment systems to guard against a slide in these standards. Our culture, from the most junior sailor to the most senior Commander, must value achieving and maintaining high operational and warfighting standards of performance and these standards must be embedded in our equipment, individuals, teams and fleets. Most significantly, these standards must include and account for the human factors in individual and team performance.
- Ongoing and immediate actions are focused on immediate upgrades and training on navigation fundamentals, assessment of operational demands and available resources and associated schedule revisions, baseline readiness assessments of all Seventh Fleet cruisers and destroyers, consolidation of authority and accountability for readiness in lines of authority, implementation of circadian watch rhythms and baseline assessment of all watch bills and baselining the force generation model in the FDNF Japan.
- Intermediate term actions are focused on development of a balanced force generation model for FDNF forces in Japan, revised qualification standards, establishment of comprehensive policies on managing fatigue, review and revision of readiness assessment standards, alignment of operational requirements to available resources and acceleration of electronic navigation system upgrades.
- Longer term actions are focused on include baseline reviews, revisions and improvements to individual and team training skills with emphasis on basic seamanship, navigation and integrated bridge equipment, consolidation of responsibility and authority for bridge system modernization and human systems integration, accelerated radar upgrades and revisions to core officer and enlisted curricula with emphasis on navigation skills.
- The Navy is considering additional areas for review as highlighted by this report, including but not limited to force structure, improving acquisition processes to fully account for training and integrated logistics support, improving processes for learning across communities and improvements in damage control.